



# Teachers' Guide

# INDIANS of the Plains

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MAN IN HIS WORLD



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# Teachers' Guide

## INDIANS of the Plains

MAN IN HIS WORLD



**Fitzhenry & Whiteside Limited**

This book recreates some facets of the culture of the Indians of the Plains, as it was at the time of first contact with European culture. The book is basically social studies, with an historical basis and much geography included. It also involves some study of science, mathematics, art, music and physical education.

The authors have included various aspects of an integrated language arts program. The modern-day story of Paul and Johnny Joseph and the stories of Indian children in the past thread through the book so that, while their main function is to interest and excite as part of the whole, they may be taken individually to develop silent reading skills. These include finding main ideas, reading for details, understanding cause and effect, reading between the lines, finding proof, and making an outline and summary. The words in italics encourage use of dictionary skills, and increase vocabularies.

Opportunities are offered for the writing of description and plays. Students will enjoy writing their letters describing the Indian warrior, simultaneously learning the correct format of a letter. The final activity in the book presents an opportunity for the teacher to outline simple debating procedures. Pupils should make use of research skills. Encyclopaedias, biographies, history texts, films, filmstrips, magazines, and newspapers can all be used to learn more about such topics as Indian heroes, the Sun Dance and the conflicts in the west.

Many students will be led to further study on pertinent topics of their own choosing from the research.

### PAGES 3 — 4

In 1875 The North West Mounted Police established a post where the Bow and Elbow Rivers joined. This was the beginning of the city of Calgary, Alberta.

Each July the Calgary Stampede is staged, advertised as "The Greatest Outdoor Show on Earth." It is held in the Exhibition Grounds where the Plains Indians set up their tipis and invite everyone to visit and watch their dancing.

For more information, write to:

Calgary Tourist and Convention Association,  
Hospitality Center, Mewata Park,  
Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

### PAGE 5

Poetry: *Carnival Procession — Calgary Stampede*, by Arthur Stringer.

### PAGE 6

Poetry: *Vastness*, by Charles Mair.

### The Great Plains

Before beginning your study of the Plains Indians, thoroughly establish the environmental conditions in which they lived.

The map on page 8 outlines the area in North America where plains conditions exist. The pictures on 6 and 7 represent a north to south progression in the area.

Students will probably associate plains with flatness, but use a diversity of pictures to point out local variations in landscape.

Stream and river patterns winding over the plains have often eroded and dissected the plains so much that from ground level the landscape looks anything but flat. (It was actually in the lower valley lands that most of the Indians' activities took place.)

The pictures show the major types of natural vegetation as grasses. Several of the pictures show livestock grazing on these grasslands. Remind students of this when you later discuss the food supply of the buffalo. The picture from Montana shows cultivated land. This area is being used today to grow selected grasses, giving the plains one of its most important exports — various types of grains.

Note that trees exist on the Great Plains. They are normally restricted to uplands, where there is slightly higher precipitation on windward slopes, or in valleys, where additional moisture is obtained from ground flow water.

The five climatic graphs become more meaningful if, for comparative purposes, the climatic graph of the home area is studied first.

Locate these stations on a map and notice the great latitudinal differences. Latitude affects temperatures on the plains, producing warmer conditions both in winter and summer as one proceeds south. These graphs indicate cold winters and warm summers. Note particularly how cold it becomes during the winter. Only one station shows a January average above freezing. (Keep this in mind when you discuss Indian



homes and dress). Great Plains are characterized by low precipitation. As a rule, when annual precipitation drops below 10", desert conditions develop, and when more than 20", the landscape becomes tree-covered. This is not the case, however, in the area around Bison (21.04"). Point this out to the class, and have them explain the natural vegetation by relating the high summer temperature (July average 79.6 ) with the season of highest precipitation (May to August). High temperatures will increase evaporation and reduce precipitation effectiveness.

Only in the west, where mountains rise sharply, is the boundary of the Great Plains region distinct. To the east, as precipitation increases, tree growth also increases and the grassy plains gradually change to natural forest. In the south, increasing temperatures reduce precipitation effectiveness and the grasslands eventually become desert. To the north the shorter summer and colder temperatures reduce all vegetation to tundra varieties. The hard rock outcrops of the Canadian Shield also help to define the boundary of the Great Plains in the north.

PAGE 9

7. Mandan	Comanche
Hidatsa	Jicarilla Apache
Ute	Flatheads
Shoshoni	Piegans

The excerpt was copied from a letter in Father Lacombe's handwriting, approximately translated as:  
"It would be difficult to give a fair idea of the number of these Indians, since there is no regular census. However, you could give an approximate number, as I am going to try to do (as he did)."

Pere Lacombe — The Man of Good Heart [Arsokitsiparpi].

Albert Lacombe was born on a farm near St. Sulpice, Quebec, and educated as a priest in Montreal. In 1852 he went to Edmonton where he set up a chapel and school, then north to learn the Cree language and write a dictionary in that language. He later wrote a Blackfoot dictionary. The Blackfeet gave him his Indian name for the help he gave them during a scarlet-fever epidemic.

Lacombe became a roving missionary of the plains, covering the land between the Bow and Peace Rivers, from the foothills to the forks of the Saskatchewan River. He convinced the Indians that they should permit the laying of railroad tracks across their land. He persuaded the western tribes not to join the Riel Rebellion. He died in 1916 in a home which he had helped establish for the aged poor.

To the south, a Jesuit priest, Father Pierre-Jean de Smet, devoted his life to missionary work

among the Plains Indians. He was the only European allowed to enter the Powder River country when Red Cloud negotiated peace.

PAGES 12-13

Cortez, Hernan (1485 — 1547)

In 1519, Cortez sailed from Cuba to the Yucatan Peninsula, then to the Mexican coast where he founded Vera Cruz. When he and his men reached Tenochtitlan, they were welcomed by the Emperor Montezuma. Cortez was believed to be Quetzalcoatl, an ancient god. Montezuma was imprisoned and killed. Cortez and his men captured the capital city of the Aztecs on August 13, 1521.

When the natives first saw the Spaniards on horseback, it is said that they believed the horse and rider to be one large animal and were astonished when the riders dismounted. The Plains Indians referred to the horses as "big dogs." The Indians bought some from the Spanish. Some Indians owned as many as a hundred horses. The horse was a status symbol. Beautiful and abundant trappings on a woman's horse signified that her husband was rich and powerful. Women's saddles had pommels front and back; men's saddles were simple pads.

PAGES 14 — 15

The Buffalo or North American Bison

Most of the body of the North American bison is covered with long, shaggy hair. It has shaggy forequarters, a hump just behind the neck, fourteen pairs of ribs and small horns set far apart. The dark brown coat falls out in patches in the spring and a shorter, lighter summer coat grows in. The largest males may be six feet tall at the shoulders and weigh 1 1/2 tons.

In the 16th century the herds covered the basins of the Mississippi, Missouri, and Ohio Rivers, spreading from Mexico into Canada, and from the Rockies to the Appalachians.

In 1905 the American Bison Society was formed and established reserves in the United States and Canada. By 1935 there were 20,000 bison in North America. The United States and Canada now have whole herds of buffalo. They can be seen in Montana, Kansas, South Dakota, Nebraska, Wyoming and Alberta. By 1973 there were approximately 9,000 in the United States and 16,000 in Canada.

Coronado, Francisco Vasquez de (1510 — 1554)

In 1540, Coronado marched north from Mexico with 250 horsemen, 70 footmen, friendly Indians, baggage animals and cattle, in search of the Seven Cities of Cibola. These were reported to be fabulously rich Indian cities but turned out to be simple pueblos in New Mexico. Coronado and his men travelled through Arizona, Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas, exploring the prairies and entering the villages of buffalo-hunting tribes. They returned to Mexico in the spring of 1542.



The passage may be translated: "All those Indians, except the Woodland Crees, live exclusively by hunting buffalo, a great number of which they destroy each season of the year. They unceasingly hunt these herds, which are visibly diminishing each year and are threatening to disappear completely. The buffalo hunt is another very important question for the future of these nomadic tribes. For a certain number of years the hunt of these animals has been taking place on a large scale, especially since the merchants have been organizing themselves to this end in order to buy the buffalo skins."

Early explorers of the prairies reported seeing buffalo herds ten miles long and eight miles wide. It was reported that one herd was so large that it took three days for it to cross the Missouri River.

While the Plains Indians killed only those animals needed for food, clothing, and shelter, the buffalo hunters killed the giant beasts for their hides, and occasionally their tongues, and left the rest to rot. These men worked in groups of four or five. The leader, or hunter, was a skilled shooter, using the Sharps rifle, or "Big Fifty," to kill as many of the buffalo as his partners could skin. The skinners, usually two, worked quickly using sharp knives and a roped mule to "peel" the hide from the carcass. The stretchers pegged the skins in a dry, sunny, stone-free area. Fat and flesh were scraped away and the hides were dried by the sun and wind. Rain could ruin them. Dodge City, Kansas, was originally known as Buffalo City because it was from there that millions of buffalo hides were shipped east.

Early Hudson Bay Company traders paid \$2.50 for a buffalo robe from a fall hunt and \$1.25 for a robe from a summer hunt. It is estimated that only one in six buffalo hides were marketable, since many were ruined by improper removal and curing. When the settlers arrived on the prairies, they collected the skeletons of the buffalo. Bones brought \$8.00 a ton and horns \$12.00 per ton. Regina, Saskatchewan, was originally called "Pile of Bones" for the great heaps of buffalo bones piled there for shipment. The bones were used in refining sugar and the manufacture of bone china, as well as bonemeal fertilizer. Horns became buttons, tool handles, and ornaments.

## PAGE 17

The diagram represents a surround. The Indians formed a circle around part of a herd and forced the animals to mill about, making good targets. The Indians built a corral. Leading to it were fences which narrowed in a "V" shape. The buffalo were lured into it by an Indian draped in a calf skin and making sounds like a young buffalo. Once the herd started to move, other members of the tribe moved in behind to keep it moving.

Where there was no natural cliff over which to

drive the buffalo, the Indians often dug pits. If the wind was right, fire might be used to stampede a herd.

Because the buffalo were not afraid of other animals, an Indian would sometimes camouflage himself with animal skins and creep close enough to the herd to kill a buffalo.

The seven symbols, from top to bottom, represent: boulders, buffalo, Indians, Indians waving hides, bowmen, the chute and the impound.

## PAGES 18 — 19

To locate this area on the Great Plains, use the latitude and longitude shown on the map.

Since this is a North American site, the latitude must be N. (north of the equator), and the longitude W. (west of the prime meridian). There is one line of latitude shown, 50° 35' N., and two lines of longitude 105° 15' W. and 105° 30' W.

Wall maps and atlas maps do not generally give measurements closer than full degrees so that you may ignore the minute portion of the readings on the topographical map. (Read your site to the nearest degree, as 50° N. latitude and 105° W. longitude).

The contour lines are marked in brown. They are placed on the map to show the elevation of the land. Some of the contour lines have the elevation marked on them, for instance 1750. This means that any point along that line will be 1,750 feet above sea level. Notice that the difference in elevation between each contour line (the contour interval) is 25 feet. A contour line next to the 1750' line should therefore be either at 1775' or 1725'. It is easy to determine whether the land is rising or dropping by first noting the relationship of two clearly marked lines (eg. 1750' and 1875').

The 1659' marking in the middle of the lake is a spot height and indicates the surface level of the lake water. The farther the contour lines are from each other, the more gentle the slope. The flattest land is therefore towards the south-west portion of the map.

Where contour lines are close together, slopes are steep. This is the case on both the north and south shore of Buffalo Pound Lake, where steep cliffs rise from the lake approximately 250'.

The symbols on this map (such as those for roads, houses, barns, and dams) indicate the present land use and should be ignored when attempting the concluding exercise.

## PAGE 21

Dog Soldiers (Hotamitanio) formed one of the soldier societies or warrior groups. They were considered the bravest of all warriors. Some of them carried the "dog rope." This was carried around the shoulder and in time of battle was fastened to the ground at one end. The wearer then had to fight to the death or until a friend released him.



Most Plains Indians had military societies. It was their duty to police the camp, organize the buffalo hunt and guard the tribe as it moved from place to place.

A long-handled spear or lance might be used during the hunt, and later a gun. The first rifles were single-shot and therefore required reloading. Ammunition for these, unlike arrows, was not readily available.

## PAGE 23

Plains Indian men were expected to bring home meat, make weapons, wage war and perform rituals. Plains Indian women were the gatherers. They supplemented the family diet with such items as wild roots, milkweed buds and thistles. It was their job to gather wood for fires, prepare food, dress the hides, sew, and decorate clothes, robes and lodges. It was not unusual for Indian hunters to have more than one wife.

For women the most important tools were the scraper, the flesher and the drawblade. The scraper was a flat stone which was used to remove the meat and fat from inside the hide. The flesher was a piece of flint with a handle. It was used to hack down the hide to the required thinness. The drawblade was a curved willow stick filled with a bone splinter. It was used to shave hair from the hide.

Tanning the hide was also women's work. The brains and liver of the buffalo were mixed with soapweed and grease and rubbed into both sides of the hide, which was soaked overnight and dried in the sun, then softened by being pulled back and forth over a rope or through a hole in the scapula of the buffalo.

hide scraper — bones

spoon — horn

moccasins — hide

drum — hide

fuel — chips

Paintbrush — nosebone

shield — hide

arrow points — bones

bedding — hide

bowl — skull

needle — small bones

sled runners — curved ribs

stuffing — hair

arrow straightener — shoulder blade

bow string — muscle

ornaments — beard

tips for poles — beard

kettle — stomach

fly swatter — tail

cooking oil — tallow

hammer — hoof

hide softener — brains

decorations — horns (for war bonnet)

digging tool — shoulder blade

food storage pouch — hide

berry pounder — leg bone

thread — muscle

tipi cover — hide

ceremonial display — skull

## PAGE 24

After digging a hole, the Indian woman lined it with the stomach pouch of the buffalo. This was pegged to the ground and filled with water. Stones were heated in a fire and placed in the pouch using sticks. The boiling water cooked the meat.

## PAGE 25

Pemmican is a combination of Cree words: "Pe-mili-kan." "Pe-mili" means "grease," and "kan" means "a sort of." A very good pemmican was produced by pulping chokecherries (including the pit) on stone mortars, drying them in the sun, and mixing with pounded buffalo meat. In the early days of settlement the Hudson Bay Company paid 6¢ a pound for pemmican.

### Suggested Readings:

**There Still Are Buffalo**, by Ann Clark

**The Flower-fed Buffaloes**, by Vachel Lindsay

**The Passing of the Buffalo**, by Hamlin Garland

**Buffalo Dusk**, by Carl Sandburg

## PAGE 26

This is the coat of arms of Manitoba, one of Canada's prairie provinces. Plains Indians hunted the buffalo in this area. The buffalo emblem is also part of the insignia of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and is used on United States coinage.

## PAGES 27 — 31

The tipi was a tent made from buffalo hide tanned on both sides stretched around a framework of 14 to 18 smooth poles. It was held down by wooden pegs. Leather thongs tied the poles together.

Before erecting a tipi, women would excavate four to five inches, leaving a sod bench around the edge to make a foundation for beds. The bare floor was wetted and packed down. A small tipi could be made from ten buffalo hides but up to twenty might be used. They were sewn together by women working as a group.

The lining of the lodge was tied part way up the poles and folded inward over the bench area to prevent drafts. Grass was used as padding. Equipment and dried food could be stored behind the backrests. Common decorations were buffalo, black bands and white spots (representing stars in the dark night), and a band of red (symbolizing the earth). The two flaps of skin (or smoke holes) attached to long poles could be moved as the direction of the wind changed. Smoke from the fire could escape through them.

Compare the diagram at the bottom of page 30 with the picture at the top. The middle diagram is a view from above, showing outer hides, poles and lining (or dew-cloth).



In the diagram at the top of page 31, the scale is in feet.

1. bed
2. backrest
3. storage
4. fireplace

Poles were used for the framework of the Indian's bed. They were placed two or three feet apart and then pegged in place. Bedding material may have been grass, leaves, or pine boughs. The backrest was tall (5' long, 30" wide tapering to 18" at the top) and triangular. A tripod held it in place. The willow rods were lashed to the frame with sinew. The backrest was the equivalent of a chair.

#### PAGES 32 — 3

Originally the Indians' only domesticated animal was the dog. It was used for transportation. On ceremonial occasions, dogs were sometimes eaten. There were several breeds, none of them large.

Using a travois, a dog could drag 40 pounds 5 or 6 miles a day. A horse could transport up to 200 pounds 10 or 12 miles a day. After the arrival of the horse, it was not unusual for a tribe to travel between 500 and 800 miles during the spring, summer and fall.

The poles of the travois were also used as the poles of the tipi. At this time Europeans were crossing the prairies in wheeled wagons. When crossing a large body of water, the Plains Indians constructed a bowl-shaped boat made of branches covered with buffalo hide and called a "bull boat."

#### PAGE 34

Men wore a shirt, leggings, moccasins, and sometimes bison robes against the cold. Women wore dresses of deer or elk skin, leggings and moccasins. Moccasins were soled with rawhide for protection. Fur caps were worn. Ornaments such as necklaces, earrings and pendants were made from teeth and bone.

#### PAGE 37

The illustration is from a painting by Paul Kane. He was born in 1810 in Ireland and immigrated to Toronto, Ontario, in 1818. Between 1846 — 1848, he crossed Canada to study Indian life and capture their culture in his paintings. He died in 1871.

#### PAGE 39

- Top: The sticks or stones, marked differently on either side, are shaken and tossed. The winner must have the same pattern showing on both when they land.
- Next: Illustration of story on page 38.

Middle: Equipment for Hoop and Pole. The hoop is rolled and players try to slide the pole through a space in the moving hoop.

Next: The object is to toss the square and impale it on the point, using only one hand, which is on the handle.

Bottom: Stick toss and wrestling.

#### PAGES 40 — 1

The Plains Indians waged war for glory, revenge or to humiliate and punish an enemy. Warfare was a great game in which scoring took precedence over killing. Scoring was counting of coup, which was the touching or striking of an enemy with the hand, a weapon or a coup stick. Crow and eagle feathers were used as coup feathers and in war bonnets. The feathers of the eagle were greatly prized. Much ceremony surrounded the capture of an eagle. He was caught by hand and strangled but his flesh was never eaten. He was coveted only for his feathers.

#### Catlin, George (1796 — 1872)

This American, self-taught artist left Philadelphia to travel westward to depict the customs of the American Indian and collect samples of their crafts before their way of life was destroyed by the settlers. He used only a few hues in his paintings and applied thin layers of paint. His works have been a valuable source of information on the Indian culture.

The Mandan Indians were a farming people who lived in earth lodges. They knew how to make pottery. When the first settlers came to the plains, they adapted the style of the Indian earth-lodges to make their own sod houses.

Only about 100 Mandans out of 1800 survived a smallpox epidemic in 1837. The Mandans disappeared as a people when the few survivors became part of other tribes.

The medicine bag varied from group to group. Along with things such as roots, rocks and pipes, it might contain the skin, fur, feathers or some other part of an animal which was considered the protector of the owner as revealed to him in a vision. Some famous bundles were owned by societies of tribes. All bundles might be bought, sold, or transferred with ritual and music. The bundle was useless unless the new owner had learned the stories and songs which told of the visions of the original owner.

#### PAGES 42 — 3

The bow was made of wood or horn and strung with twisted sinew or vine. Wood from the yew is hard and close-grained. Its elasticity and flexibility make it ideal for bows. Willow wood is light, soft and tough. It was more easily found because the willow is adaptable to most soils. The wood of the ash is extremely hard. The bow was curved by applying grease to it, heating it



over a fire, bending it with the foot, and holding it until cool. Sinew, applied wet, shrank as it dried and gave the bow strength.

The arrow was tipped with a flaked stone point. Traders later brought in iron points shaped like triangles. Arrow wood was cut in winter from the ash, birch and willow. The feathers were taken from the eagle or hawk.

## PAGES 46 — 7

### The Shield

There were two kinds of shields — the undecorated ones, which had no power, and the sacred shields. They were made from bull buffalo hide, particularly that part covering the neck, shoulder or hump. This was thickened and toughened by steaming, and was hard enough to turn an arrow or spear on an angle.

These shields were round, approximately 18" in diameter. It was believed that the owner was endowed with the qualities of the birds or mammals represented on his shield. Red denoted strength and black was added after success in battle. These sacred shields were covered and kept outside the lodge on a tripod or pole. The cover was removed immediately before battle. Both shield and cover were buried with the owner, unless they had been passed on to a young, brave warrior. For striking examples of Indian shields, see Seven Arrows (Harper & Row, 1972).

The Sharps Rifle was a single-shot rifle first developed in 1848. It was a lever-action, breech-loading gun which became very popular with buffalo hunters. It was strong and could be quickly and easily loaded.

The Winchester Rifle was first produced in 1873. It fired 15 bullets contained in an ammunition holder or magazine. It was a lever-action rifle using metal cartridges.

## PAGE 50

### Sitting Bull [Tatanka Yotanka]

Sitting Bull was a chief of the Hunkpapa Sioux. In 1876 he led a thousand Sioux and Cheyenne in the Battle of the Rosebud. At the Battle of the Little Big Horn, 3000 Sioux and Cheyenne defeated Custer and all his forces. Sitting Bull crossed into Canada, but the winters were severe and his people received no supplies, so they returned and surrendered in 1881. Sitting Bull was sent to Standing Rock Agency Reserve. All the Sioux looked to this brave, intelligent man as their leader, and he tried hard to prevent the American government from taking more Sioux land. He was killed when it was thought he would lead his people against the government.

### Crazy Horse

Crazy Horse was a chief of the Oglala Sioux and took part in the Battle of the Little Big Horn. He studied the ways in which the American

Army made war and became an expert in the art of warfare. He and his people surrendered only when promised a reservation in the Powder River country. Crazy Horse was killed at the age of 35 (in 1877) when he tried to escape being imprisoned. His parents buried him secretly somewhere near Wounded Knee Creek.

### Little Crow (Ta-oya-te-duta)

Little Crow was a chief of the Mdewakantons, a division of the Santee Sioux. He went to Washington to visit President Buchanan and tried to lead his people into living peaceably on their reservation, although when supplies were not delivered to the hungry Indians an uprising began. Little Crow took his band into Canada and sought help from the British authorities at Fort Garry (Winnipeg, Manitoba). They received food but not the ammunition they needed. The group returned to Minnesota, and Little Crow was killed while picking raspberries, in July, 1863. (Little Crow was a woodland Sioux. Discover whether the pupils differentiate between these and the plains Sioux).

### Rain-In-The-Face

Rain-In-The-Face took part in the Battle of the Little Big Horn. He (among others) claimed to have killed General Custer. He was immortalized in the poem, The Revenge of Rain-In-The-Face, by Longfellow.

### Red Cloud (Mahpiua Luta)

Red Cloud was an Oglala Teton Sioux. He was a great warrior (counting 80 coups in battle) and a good speaker. For two years he fought desperately to prevent the building of a road and forts through the Powder River country, the Sioux hunting grounds. He finally led his people onto a reservation, signing a treaty which said in part, "From this day forward, all war between the parties to this agreement shall forever cease."

### Black Kettle (Motavato)

Black Kettle was a Cheyenne who signed a treaty with the American government which he believed gave the Indians the right to hunt buffalo freely, although the Indians would live on a reservation between Sand Creek and the Arkansas River. He visited Abraham Lincoln in Washington and received medals and a flag which always flew above his tipi. His great desire was to live in peace. He and his people settled in a village near Sand Creek. The American army attacked this camp and even Black Kettle's flag could not protect the Indians from slaughter. Black Kettle escaped and led his group south of the Arkansas River to join the Arapaho, Kiowa and Comanche. Black Kettle and his people finally settled on the Washita River. Custer and his soldiers found them there and killed Black Kettle.



## White Antelope

White Antelope was a Cheyenne and worked with Black Kettle for peace for his people. At 75 he was killed at Sand Creek trying to stop the battle.

## Poundmaker

Poundmaker was a Cree leader who negotiated a treaty with the Canadian government in 1879, and settled on a reserve on the Battle River. He urged his people to become farmers and send their children to school so that they would prosper and be happy. He knew that the coming of the railroad and the disappearance of the buffalo meant the end of the old life for his people.

During the Riel Rebellion, Poundmaker led his warriors in a siege of Battleford, hoping for better treatment of the Indians in northern Saskatchewan. He proved himself a clever fighter, but when Riel was captured Poundmaker surrendered and was imprisoned. He died shortly after his release.

## PAGES 51 — 5

"Seeking a vision" was the key to the religion of the Plains Indians. Some would go days without food or water for their vision; some sought revelation alone in a quiet place. From their visions, Plains Indians might discover signs to paint on their shields or tipis, songs to sing to ward off death, or cures for illness.

The Sun Dance was a ceremony common to most Plains Indian tribes, with only the details of the ritual differing. Generally the celebrations lasted eight days. The first four were spent in feasting, socializing, dancing, exchanging gifts and rehearsing. Then the lodge was built.

The tree which became the central pole was chosen by a warrior who counted coup on the tree as did members of the military society. It was raised with great ritual. In the crotch at its upper end was placed a thunder bird nest (a bundle of brush), a broken arrow and buffalo meat. This was encircled by upright poles joined to the central pole by stringers. Valuable buffalo skins were donated and used to partly cover the Sun Dance Lodge. In the middle, an altar was built around a sacred buffalo skull. Self-torture was endured to gain good fortune, public approval and social prestige.

This Indian ceremonial was outlawed in 1881. It was restored in 1930 without the self-torture.

## Scalp Dance

This dance, around a great fire, might last all night or even two or three days. It was a happy time in which all participated, both men and women. The scalps were carried on poles.

## Ghost Dance

Wovoka, a Paiute, founded the religion of the Ghost Dance. He believed that the earth would be covered with new soil which would bury the

Europeans, that grass, water and trees would reappear along with buffalo and horses and that all dead warriors would return if the Indians did the Ghost Dance. When the Indians wore Ghost Shirts painted with magic symbols, they believed nothing could harm them.

## The Sweat Lodge

This dome-shaped lodge was used as a home during fasting. Men and women purified themselves in the steam before feasts and religious dances.

## The Horse Dance

This was a war dance performed by mounted warriors who raced into camp, rode quickly around the middle, dismounted, danced, remounted and raced out.

## Funeral Rites

Plains Indians often used platform (or tree) burial and/or inhumation. Food and other objects were placed near the grave. A man might be buried with his weapons, a woman with her tools. The bodies were dressed in their finest clothing and wrapped. The deceased were deeply mourned.

## The Pipe

The pipe most often used was a straight tube which might be made of wood from the ash tree. Tobacco was stuffed into the end and lit. In an 'elbow pipe' the stem was bent. An extra long stem could be added to cool the smoke. Wooden stems were decorated with stone.

Catlinite (named after the artist, George Catlin) is a material found in quarries in Minnesota. It is dull red mottled with white. When first removed from the earth it is soft and can be shaped. It hardens as it dries. The planting and smoking of tobacco were both deeply ritualized.

Sign talk was used and understood by all Indian tribes. Because the Plains Indians moved constantly and met other groups, they developed sign language to a fine art. The first Europeans on the plains learned sign language so that they too could be understood wherever they went. Refer to Hofsinde's **Indian Sign Language** (Morrow, 1956).

## PAGE 59

For their paintings the Indians used brown, yellow, and red from the earth, blue from grapes or berries, and green obtained by mixing grape juices with yellow earth. The pigments were mixed with water. A piece of sinew was added and left to soften. It became glue-like and made the paints stick to the surface.

## PAGES 60 — 4

Students should be encouraged to use the bibliography and library to research topics and add to the enjoyment of their study of Indians of the Plains.



# AN INTEGRATED STUDIES TABLE

	Geography	English	Science	History	Mathematics	Language	Art and Crafts	Household Science	Physical Education	Music
The Adventure Begins	X	X								
The Great Plains	X	X	X	X	X	X				
The Coming of the Horse	X			X						
The Buffalo	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
The Indian Home		X	X		X	X	X			
On the Move				X	X		X			
Clothing			X	X			X			
Games		X							X	
Warfare				X			X			
Weapons		X	X	X		X	X			
Dances and Ceremonies		X		X					X	X
Musical Instruments							X			X
Communications		X		X		X	X			
The Past On a Map	X	X		X						

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